My role as designer is to work for inhabitants and their daily surroundings. So in creating a city that is smart, I do not want to adhere to the current smart city discourse.

With literature of Saskia Sassen and Jane Jacobs in mind, I take on the local scale. Not acting like a technocratic planner or designer, but finding the niches of the everyday life that happens on the street.

- What are the most pressing issues in Heerlen at the moment?
- How can they be materialised? That has lead to several local ‘smart’ opportunities, of innovation. Which meant I asked the participants to think about the ‘what if’ questions.

My focal point concerning the second question, was to steer for a participatory design. In a workshop with local inhabitants, I have asked them two things:

- What are the most pressing issues in Heerlen at the moment?
- How can they be materialised? That has lead to several local ‘smart’ opportunities, of which I have sketched out the most interesting ones here.

Ellen Dijks
“...When you walk around in Heerlen, you can’t see any of its history. There is a lot of history, but it’s history with a lot of emotions. And you still can’t see any of it’s history. Well that’s not what we want.

Liz van Booven
“There are so many nice buildings in Heerlen. But because they are in a not so well shape or have other bad buildings around it, they don’t get the attention they need. We need to look after new city planning when renovating parts of the city, or adding new buildings. But then we should enhance the whole instead of only one building.”

With literature of Saskia Sassen and Jane Jacobs in mind, I take on an insight perspective. Not acting like a technocratic planner or designer, but finding the niches of the everyday life that happens on the street.

With a changing public space it can be battled.

Liz van Booven
“...The city looked like...”